

12-18-98

FACT SHEET

DIRECT FINAL AMENDMENT TO THE FINAL AIR TOXICS REGULATION FOR PULP AND PAPER PRODUCTION

TODAY'S ACTION...

- ◆ The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is issuing a direct final rule to amend the regulation which controls emissions of air toxics from pulp and paper mills. Air toxics, which are also known as hazardous air pollutants, are those pollutants known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health or environmental effects.
- ◆ This amendment provides mills enrolled in the Voluntary Advanced Technology Incentives Program (“incentives program”) with an additional option for use in complying with an interim emission limitation for chloroform.
- ◆ EPA issued the original rule on April 15, 1998 as the air component of the Pulp and Paper Cluster Rules, an innovative regulatory effort addressing both air and water releases from pulp and paper mills.
- ◆ EPA expects this amendment to be of interest to kraft mill owners and operators subject to the rule, and to State and local regulatory agencies with kraft pulp mills in their jurisdictions.
- ◆ The amendment will be effective upon publication in the Federal Register, if no significant adverse comments are received by 30 days from the date of publication in the Federal Register.

WHAT DOES THE AMENDMENT TO THE EPA’S PULP AND PAPER AIR TOXICS RULE REQUIRE?

- ◆ The incentives program encourages pulp and paper mills to reduce water releases beyond levels achieved by application of the best available technology (BAT).
- ◆ One inducement for mills participating in the incentives program is a three-year extension (until 2004) to comply with air toxic control requirements for bleach plants. Mills not in the incentives program must meet the full air toxic control requirements for bleach plants by 2001.

- ◆ As a condition of receiving the three year compliance extension, the mills must meet an interim requirement to limit chloroform emissions by not increasing chlorine or hypochlorite use in bleaching applications.
- ◆ This amendment adds an alternative procedure for meeting the interim chloroform limit which is environmentally equivalent to the present one.
- ◆ This alternative procedure allows mill operators the option of meeting the interim requirement to limit chloroform emissions by achieving BAT levels for 2,3,7,8-tetrachloro-dibenzo-p-dioxin and adsorbable organic halides in their plants' water releases.

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS?

- ◆ This amendment should encourage participation in the incentives program resulting in more significant reductions in water emissions in exchange for a slightly extended deadline for compliance with air toxics standards at bleaching plants.
- ◆ EPA's original final rule will reduce air toxics emissions from pulp and paper production by approximately 155,000 tons annually, representing a 60 percent reduction from current levels. In addition, EPA estimates that the original water regulations will result in a 91 percent reduction in dioxin/furan discharges to water and an 82 percent reduction in chloroform discharges.

HOW DOES THE AMENDMENT PROVIDE FLEXIBILITY TO INDUSTRY?

- ◆ The amendment provides substantial flexibility to mill operators by allowing an environmentally equivalent alternative means of complying with the interim air toxics standards of the Pulp and Paper Cluster rules.
- ◆ This changes should encourage increased participation in the original rule's innovative incentives program.
- ◆ This amendment will have no impact on the information collection burden estimates made previously for the final rule. The changes are interpretations of requirements and are not additional requirements.

BACKGROUND

- ◆ Under the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, EPA is required to regulate sources of 188 listed toxic air pollutants. (Note that this list originally contained

189 pollutants, but EPA has subsequently removed the chemical caprolactam from the list.) On July 16, 1992, EPA published a list of industrial source categories that emit one or more of these air toxics. For listed categories of “major” sources (those that emit 10 tons/year or more of a listed pollutant or 25 tons/year or more of a combination of pollutants), the Clean Air Act requires EPA to develop standards that require the application of stringent air pollution controls, known as maximum achievable control technology (MACT).

- ◆ In its July 16, 1992 published list of industry groups to be regulated, EPA identified pulp and paper production as a major source of air toxics. The final air toxics rule for pulp and paper production was issued on April 15, 1998 as the air component of the Pulp and Paper Cluster Rules.
- ◆ The original rule (the first integrated, multi-media regulation to control the release of pollutants to water and air from one industry) contains a provision providing incentives for facilities to exceed BAT limits for water emissions. At present, no plants have taken advantage of this provision; however, EPA is working with several companies interested in enrolling.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- ◆ Interested parties can download the amendment from EPA's web site on the Internet under “recent actions” at the following address: (www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg). For further information about the amendment or the rule itself, contact Stephen Shedd of the EPA’s Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at (919) 541-5397 or shedd.steve@epa.gov, or visit the pulp and paper air toxics website at the following address: www.epa.gov/ttn/uatw/pulp/pulppg.html
- ◆ EPA's Office of Air and Radiation’s homepage on the Internet contains a wide range of information on the air toxics program, as well as many other air pollution programs and issues. The Office of Air and Radiation's home page address is: (www.epa.gov/oar/).